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formation obtained from river and railroad tariffs and from interviews and correspondence with interested industrial officials. The writer makes no attempt at a comparative historical survey of water and rail rates, although he could have strengthened his arguments by this method. The general tone of the monograph is highly unfavorable to governmental expenditure in deepening the Lakes-to-the-Gulf waterway as a means of reducing freight rates. In the chapter on the Interchangeability of River, Lake, and Ocean Vessels, the impracticability of such a scheme is made clear. "The river freight in the main is that which originates in, or is destined to, points within the levee or other non-rail points." The already navigable stretches of the lower Mississippi are "of doubtful economic value."

While Mr. Shelton has done little more than restate the conclusions of other opponents of the proposed deep waterway, his monograph is an addition to the literature on the subject because it deals only with specific traffic difficulties and with these in a concise, concrete manner.

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The History of the British Post Office. By J. C. HEMMEON.
(Cambridge: Harvard University. 1912. Pp. xi, 261.
\$2.00.)

This volume, the seventh in the series of *Harvard Economic Studies*, will not be accounted more entertaining than earlier books on the same subject, but it certainly excels them otherwise. Former writers on the British post office generally made abundant use of their opportunity to dwell upon the picturesque aspects of the subject. The present book does not err in this direction. The tendencies which I venture to criticise are all of the opposite sort. Opportunities for vivid description are neglected; letters, petitions, reports, and other documents are cited, but rarely and only briefly quoted; the published reminiscences of postal officials are avoided; affairs which appeal most to popular imagination, such as the efforts of Rowland Hill, do not receive as much attention as their importance warrants. Will not every reader be disappointed when he is informed that "the history of the adoption of penny postage has been so well told by Hill himself that only a bare story of its acceptance by Parliament is necessary here" (p. 59)? The significance of the post office in the broader prob-

lems of monopoly, of government, of democracy, and of the diffusion of intelligence is but faintly suggested. The last-named limitation of the work is emphasized, rather than corrected, by the fact that certain of these larger problems are suggestively touched upon in the preface.

For the author's treatment of his subject under the limitations which he seems consciously to have imposed upon himself, I have only commendation to offer. The general arrangement seems to me the proper one, though some readers will doubtless differ. As the author acknowledges (p. vi), "in the treatment of a subject so complex . . . it is not easy to decide how far its presentation should be strictly chronological or how far it should be mounted in 'longitudinal sections' exposing its salient features." The first third of the book consists of four chapters on the general history of the post office; the remainder embraces seven chapters on the principal technical problems of the service. Those who are interested in history simply as history, will be disappointed in the distribution of the material, but few such are likely to read a serious post office history. On the other hand, those who seek to study the economic problems of the post office in the light of history can hardly fail to find Mr. Hemmeon's arrangement most satisfactory. There is just enough preliminary history to give the remaining chapters the proper setting.

Aside from an excess of zeal in avoiding the spectacular, the emphasis of the book is well distributed; the relative importance of the various problems seems to be well considered; trivial matters, though not neglected, are at least subordinated; weighty matters are given due attention. In so long and intricate a history it is no slight merit to preserve a true sense of perspective. With consistency the author depends exclusively upon official information—state papers, reports, and journals. He did not have access to the originals, but he used the calendars and other printed sources faithfully and successfully. He has written in entire independence of other authors. Joyce is the only post office historian whom he consults, and he cites him sparingly, realizing that "writing as a post office official at the end of the nineteenth century Joyce hardly appreciated the conditions which his predecessors had to meet" (p. 256). The author is also to be commended for the historic tolerance consistently displayed in dealing with the policies of former days.

Finally, the study deserves to be described as comprehensive.

It may be that more attention should have been given to the railways as mail carriers, but otherwise the inland and foreign transmission of mails has been thoroughly reviewed. The longest chapter, and one of the most interesting, deals with postage rates and the finances of the office, and includes a discussion of the franking privilege. Savings bank and assurance facilities, while of great importance as social experiments, are treated in a manner which is probably adequate in view of their importance to the post office. Other subordinate functions, such as the book post, the newspaper post, the parcels post, money orders, registry of letters, and special delivery, are also sufficiently described. Separate chapters are devoted to the telegraph and the telephone, and half a chapter deals with the relations between the government and its postal employees.

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Combination among Railway Companies. By W. A. ROBERTSON.
(London: Constable and Company. 1912. Pp. 105. 1s. 6d.)

Seven different kinds of combination among the railway companies in England are described, *viz.*, amalgamation, joint-line, working-union, lease, working-agreement, running powers, pooling-agreement. The advantages and disadvantages of combination to the participating companies, outside companies, and to the public interests are considered. Outside of the blue-books, there has been surprisingly little discussion of this phase of English railway policy, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Robertson's lectures, which were delivered originally at the London School of Economics, will prove to be the precursor of a more detailed study. The present volume is marked by a certain roughness of style and by occasional obscurity of phrase, but, for all that, it makes agreeable reading. Intensive analysis is somewhat lacking, but probably a rather general treatment was called for by the conditions under which the lectures were delivered.

Mr. Robertson favors amalgamation, and argues that competition naturally tends to decline between railways which have attained a high degree of efficiency, associated with small profits. Such a condition, of course, tends to lead to combination, but, until combination is achieved, competition is hardly likely to become inert. When combination takes place, regional competition,